

## Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-07 IO-06 ISO-00 SS-15 AID-01 NSC-06  
/039 W

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P R 301045Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5913  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSTLGAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 3883

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: OREP, UNRWA, JO  
SUBJECT: VISIT TO JORDAN UNRWA ACTIVITIES OF STAFFDEL  
MCCALL/ASHWORTH

SUMMARY: SFRC STAFFDEL VISIT TO JORDAN VALUABLE. MCCALL  
AND ASHWORTH SAW RANGE OF UNRWA ACTIVITIES IN JORDAN AND  
EMBASSY BELIEVES THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY USEFULNESS AND COST  
EFFECTIVENESS OF UNRWA PROGRAMS. AT SAME TIME, STAFFDEL  
STRESSED TO JORDANIAN OFFICIALS SFRC'S CONCERN THAT RATION  
ROLLS BE RECTIFIED AND THAT INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNRWA,  
PARTICULARLY FROM OPEC COUNTRIES, BE DEMONSTRATED. GOJ  
OFFICIALS STRESSED INTENSE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF ANY  
CHANGES IN RATION ROLLS OR CUTS IN UNRWA

SERVICES AT THIS TIME, AND MADE PLEA FOR CONTINUED U.S.  
SUPPORT FOR UNRWA. END SUMMARY.

1. IN APRIL 25-27 VISIT STAFFDEL MCCALL/ASHWORTH VISITED  
UNRWA EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH FACILITIES IN REFUGEE CAMPS  
AND HAD EXTENDED DISCUSSION WITH UNRWA JORDAN INTER-  
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NATIONAL AND PALESTINIAN STAFF, AS WELL AS DISCUSSIONS  
WITH EMBASSY AND GOJ OFFICIALS. STAFFDEL SAID THEY WERE  
IMPRESSED WITH EDUCATIONAL AND HEALTH PROGRAMS OF UNRWA  
AND BY METICULOUS CONTROLS OVER RATION DISTRIBUTION.  
THEY ALSO IMPRESSED BY CANDOR OF UNRWA STAFF IN DISCUS-  
SION OF PROBLEMS OF RATION ROLLS.

2. ON APRIL 25 STAFFDEL HAD LENGTHY SESSION WITH PALESTINIAN EMPLOYEES OF UNRWA WHO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT UNRWA RATION ROLLS WERE SERIOUSLY DEFECTIVE IN THAT THEY CONTAINED NAMES OF PEOPLE NOT IN NEED, WHO HAD DEPARTED JORDAN, OR EVEN DEAD, AND THAT MANY, PARTICULARLY CHILDREN, WHO MIGHT BE PUT ON RECTIFIED ROLLS COULD NOT PRESENTLY BE ACCOMMODATED. PALESTINIAN STAFF, HOWEVER, ARGUED OHAT RATION REGISTRATION IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMBOL OF IDENTITY FOR REFUGEES, AND THAT ANY LARGE SCALE ATTEMPTS TO RECTIFY RATION ROLLS WOULD BE SEEN BY REFUGEES AS EFFORT TO EVADE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND AS BEGINNING OF ATTEMPTS TO FORCE CHANGE IN THEIR STATUS. STAFF ALSO ARGUED THAT ANY WRONGFUL DISTRIBUTION OF RATIONS UNIMPORTANT AND THAT REFUGEE COMMUNITY IN FACT OPERATED TO GET RATIONS TO THOSE IN NEED FROM THOSE NOT IN NEED. STAFFDEL POINTED OUT OBVIOUS POLITICAL DIFFICULTY FOR DONORS IN SUPPORTING PRESENT RATION ROLLS.

3. IN MEETING WITH GOJ OFFICIALS, HIGH-LEVEL JORDANIAN CONCERN OVER UNRWA PROBLEMS EVIDENCED BY ATTENDANCE AT DISCUSSION OF ACTING PRIME MINISTER AL-MAJALI, MINISTER OF INFORMATION ADNAN ABU ODEH (AS ACTING FONMIN), ACTING MINISTER OF HEALTH, MINISTER OF FINANCE, UNDER SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION (RESPONSIBLE FOR UNRWA), SUBHI AMIN AMER, FORMER DEPUTY

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PRIME MINISTER, LONG TIME MINISTER OF DEVOLOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION AND GOJ'S EXPERT ON REFUGEE MATTERS, AND TWO MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE, WHICH IS CONCERNED WITH UNRWA AND 1967 REFUGEES SUPPORTED BY JORDAN. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE UNUSUALLY HIGH LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN MEETING INTENDED TO SIGNAL NOT ONLY SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH GOJ REGARDS SUPPORT FOR UNRWA, BUT ALSO THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN SUPPORT LEVELS TRIGGERED BY U.S. COULD AFFECT JORDAN'S INTERNAL STABILITY AND IN LONG RUN, AS A RESULT, OVERALL U.S.-JORDANIAN RELATIONS.) MCCALL AND ASHWORTH TOLD GOJ OFFICIALS THAT THEY HAD BEEN SENT TO EXAMINE UNRWA ACTIVITIES BECAUSE OF SFRC CONCERN OVER NEED FOR RECTIFICATION OF REFUGEE RATION ROLLS AND TO ASSESS THE DEGREE OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNRWA. THEY SAID THEY HAD FOUND OBVIOUS CLOSE UNRWA/GOJ COOPERATION, AND FOUND THAT UNRWA ACCOMPLISHED GREAT DEAL WITH ITS RESOURCES. HOWEVER, THEY WOULD HAVE TO REPORT LITTLE RECTIFICATION OF RATION ROLLS, AND EXPRESSED HOPE ROLLS COULD BE RECTIFIED ON BASIS OF EQUITY.

4. GOJ OFFICIALS SAID THEY GREATLY WORRIED BY POSSIBLE PRO-

SPECTIVE CUTS IN UNRWA SERVICES (IN RATION REDUCTIONS  
AND PREPARATORY EDUCATION) SINCE THEY WOULD HAVE TO PICK  
UP BURDEN, AND THEY ARE ALREADY SACRIFICING HEAVILY FOR

REFUGEES. (STAFFDEL WAS TOLD SUPPORT FOR (PRIMARILY 1967)  
REFUGEES, (KNOWN LOCALLY AS "DISPLACED PERSONS") BY GOJ TOTALED  
\$28 MILLION PER YEAR PLUS CONSIDERABLE HIDDEN  
COSTS). MORE IMPORTANTLY, GOJ WAS VERY DISTURBED BY  
SECURITY PROBLEMS RECTIFICATION OR CUT IN INRWA SERVICES  
MIGHT CAUSE AS WELL AS BY TIMING OF THESE POSSIBLE  
ACTIONS. EXTREMISTS IN CAMPS COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF  
SUCH ACTIONS TO CREATE INSTABILITY AS THEY HAD TAKEN  
ADVANTAGE OF ISRAEL, INCURSION INTO LEBANON RECENTLY.  
PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING OF REFUGEES OVER PAST YEARS  
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HAD TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT; IT WAS DIFFICULT TO MAKE

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-07 IO-06 ISO-00 SS-15 AID-01 NSC-06  
/039 W

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P R 301045Z APR 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5914  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 AMMAN 3883

REFUGEES UNDERSTAND RECTIFICATION OR CUTS. CHANGES IN  
UNRWA WERE PARTICULARLY INAPPROPRIATE NOW WHEN THEY MIGHT  
DISTURB THE PEACE PROCESS. THE SUPPOSITION UNDERLYING  
UNRWA WAS THAT REFUGEES WOULD BE SUPPORTED UNTIL THERE  
WAS A SOLUTION TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT; THE COST

IN POSSIBLE POLITICAL INSTABILITY DID NOT JUSTIFY CUTS OR CHANGES IN UNRWA SUPPORT. THE REFUGEES ALREADY WERE POINTING OUT THAT THE COST OF MAINTAINING UNRWA SERVICES WAS LESS THAN THE COST OF ONE OF THE F-15'S WHICH BOMBED THEIR BROTHERS IN SOUTH LEBANON.

5. MCCALL/ASHWORTH TOLD GOJ OFFICIALS THAT THEY HAD BEEN SENT ON THEIR EVALUATION MISSION IN THE HOPE OF AVOIDING PROBLEMS AND WOULD REPORT GOJ'S CONCERNS. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, JORDANIANS SAID THEY ALREADY TAKING STEPS TO REQUEST SUPPORT FOR UNRWA FROM OPEC MEMBERS.

6. IN DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR STAFFDEL WAS TOLD THAT REFUGEES WERE AS MUCH ATTACHED TO POLITICAL SYMBOLISM OF RATIONS AS TO RATIONS PER SE, AND THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE REFUGEE FEAR THAT SMALL CHANGES WOULD LEAD TO

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GREATER ONES IN THEIR STATUS. ANY CHANGES IN UNRWA PROGRAMS MIGHT WELL BE EXPLOITED, AND AMBASSADOR DOUBTED WISDOM OF OPENING QUESTION AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT IN MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS. IN ANY EVENT, CHANGES IN CURRENT SYSTEM WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE LEAD TIME TO PLAN AN ORDERLY TRANSITION. IN SUCH CASE, IT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN TERMS OF OUR POLITICAL RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT MIDEAST NEGOTIATIONS THAT U.S. WOULD NOT BE SEEN AS FORCING CHANGES, AND WE WOULD WANT FOREKNOWLEDGE OF ANY CHANGES IN PROGRAM. MCCALL/ASHWORTH NOTED THAT THEY HAD NEVER SEEN DOLLAR USE MAXIMIZED IN AID AND RELIEF OPERATIONS AS IT WAS IN THE UNRWA PROGRAMS, BUT SAID IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE EASIER IF ONE OR TWO OF ARAB GOVERNMENTS MADE SOME MOVEMENT ON RECTIFICATION. THEY REPORTED THAT UNRWA ITSELF WELL AWARE OF PROBLEMS.

7. UNRWA COMMISSIONER-GENERAL MCELOINEY, WHO ACCOMPANIED MCCALL/ASHWORTH THROUGH MOST OF SCHEDULE IN JORDANU HELD SEPARATE MEETING WITH LEADERS OF REFUGEE CAMPS AND UNRWA LABOR UNIONS ON APRIL 26. MEETING, HELD AT REFUGEE REQUEST, WAS TO DISCUSS PROSPECTIVE CUTS IN SERVICES. REFUGEES SAID THEY BELIEVED POLITICAL REASONS LAY BEHIND THESE POSSIBLE REDUCTIONS AND THEY THEREFORE INTENDED REJECT CUTS AND MIGHT HAVE TO PROTEST BY A GENERAL STRIKE OR ABSTAINING FROM ACCEPTING SERVICES BEGINNING MAY 1. THEY ALSO REQUESTED MCELOINEY TO HAVE UNRWA INCLUDED IN UN'S GENERAL BUDGET. IN REPLY MCELOINEY DENIED THERE POLITICAL MEANING BEHIND PROSPECTIVE CUTS, STATED DEFICIT IS A FACT, AND THAT HE WOULD WORK TO OBTAIN FUNDS TO MAINTAIN PRESENT LEVELS OF SERVICES.

8. FOR DAMASCUS: MCCALL AND ASHWORTH SAID CALL ON FONMIN KHADDAM WAS UNEXPECTEDLY CORDIAL, BUSINESSLIKE, AND WITHOUT

RHETORIC. THEY MADE POINT STRONGLY TO KHADDAM ON NEED TO  
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RECTIFY RATION ROLLS; KHADDAM WAS NON-COMMITTAL IN REPLY,  
SAYING THAT PROBLEMS INVOLVED HAD TO BE UNDERSTOOD, BUT DID  
NOT DETAIL THEM. IN ANY CASE, KHADDAM SAID, THE AMOUNT OF  
RATIONS WRONGLY DISTRIBUTED WAS SMALL IN TERMS OF REFUGEE NEEDS.  
STAFFDEL SAID KHADDAM MADE ONLY ONE INDIRECT REFERENCE TO ISRAELI  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR REFUGEES AND NO REFERENCE TO ANY SPECIAL  
U.S. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM. KHADDAM ALSO TOLD STAFFDEL  
SYRIA HAD ALREADY ASKED OPEC COUNTRIES FOR SUPPORT IN MEETING  
UNRWA DEFICIT.

9. STAFFDEL ASKED IF REPORT OF THIER VISIT COULD BE MADE  
AVAILABLE TO THEM. EMBASSY HAS NO OBJECTION TO DEPARTMENT  
SUPPLYING THIS MESSAGE.  
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## Message Attributes

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